THE WITCH OF ROSENBURG.

CARDINAL WISEMAN.

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A. M. D. G.

THE

WITCH OF ROSENBURG.

A

DRAMA IN THREE ACTS.

COMPOSED FOR THE CHILDREN OF

ST. LEO'S CONVENT, CARLOW, 1864.

BY

HIS EMINENCE CARDINAL WISEMAN,
ARCHBISHOP OF WESTMINSTER.

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The Witch of Rosenburg,

A

DRAMA IN THREE ACTS.

This is the first and only manuscript of the Drama written by the Author, and forwarded to St. Leo's Convent, with his Blessing, and a request for prayers.

N. C. W.

London, November 15, 1864.

8, York Place, Portman Square, London, W.
December 12th, 1864.

My Dear Cousin and Daughter in Christ:

It has pleased Almighty God to afflict me again with illness, and I write from my bed.

Many thanks for your kind letter on St. Nicholas' day; soon after this letter you will receive a small box, addressed to the Rev. Mother, from me; it is intended for the Community, and contains a little Christmas Present, of things from the Tyrol, not indeed of much value.

But my special desire is that it be opened at recreation in presence of all the Community, and you will let me know if they like it.

Prayers if you please—to-day is the anniversary of your foundation.

Your affectionate Father in Christ,

N. CARD. WISEMAN.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

COUNTESS ANNA VON ROSENBURG, living in the Castle near.
BERTHA, her confidential maid.
LOTTE (Charlotte*), Schoolmistress in the village.
GRETCHEN (Margaret†), her friend.
FRAU PLUMPER, the Burgomaster's wife.
FRAU SEMMEL, the Baker's wife.
FRAU ZUCKER, the Grocer's wife.
THEIR THREE CHILDREN, and other girls.

The Scene is in a mountain village in the Tyrol.

[The opening Scene may be changed into a wood by having merely a curtain to fall before the image in the garden, as described in Scene I.]

The costumes as herewith sent, for the peasant women and girls.

Lotte in a simple dark gown and white apron, with a small cap, as a stranger, not in costume.

The *Countess* in more ordinary lady's dress, with white body and sleeves, and large hat with riband, &c.

Bertha the same, plainer, and wide brimmed straw hat.

N. B.—The colors in different parts of peasants' dresses may be varied—red being preferred.

* Karlotte—Lotte—Lotchen.
† Margarette—Greta—Gretchen.
The termination in *shon* is the more familiar and affectionate.

THE PROLOGUE.

If writing verse were but a poet's work,
I certainly should try this job to shirk;
But I have no resource; I fain must go it,
Though I shall thereby prove, I am no poet:
My orders are explicit;—write a play,
"Prologue and Epilogue,"—I must obey;
And so would you, if such a summons came,
So gently breathed, in dear St. Leo's name:
The purpose of a Prologue chiefly is,
To tell the moral bearing of the piece.
Now, my wish is—the youthful to remind,
Always to be considerate and kind,
Not to judge rashly—nor defects to spy,
But estimate with heart, as well as eye:
Not to despise, in pride of early strength,
Those whom, of days, God blesses with the length,
Though they may dim the eye, and curve the frame.
To be hand to the maimed, foot to the lame:
Seeking of age the pains thus to assuage;
To earn themselves, one day, a painless age.

Thus far our poet,—now it is *our* turn;
If it be his to teach,—'tis ours to learn:
May we, through life, to practise, never fail,
The lessons taught us in this simple tale!
Fearless to be, in innocence's cause,
Heedless alike of censure or applause;
So let us make of common plans reversal,
And treat what we shall act as a rehearsal;
What here is fiction—later will be fact.—
To-day we *practice*, what through life we hope to *act*.

THE ARGUMENT.

In the reign of the Emperor Honorius and the Pontificate of Innocent I., there lived on the Aventine, a Roman Patrician of great wealth, named Euphemianus. He had an only son, Alexius, whom he educated in principles of solid piety, and in the practice of unbounded charity. When he was grown up, but still young, a Divine command ordered the son to quit his father's house, and lead the life of a poor pilgrim. He accordingly repaired to Edessa, where he lived several years, while he was sought for in vain over all the world. At length he was similarly ordered to return home; and was received as a stranger into his father's house.

He remained there as many years as he had lived abroad, amidst the scorn and ill-treatment of his own domestics, until his death: when first a voice, heard through all the churches in the city, proclaimed him a Saint, and then a paper, written by himself, revealed his history.

As the years passed by Alexius in these two conditions have been variously stated by different writers, in this Drama they have been limited to five spent in each, or ten in all.

The beginning and the close of the second period, of that passed at home, form the subject of this composition; so that five years are supposed to elapse between its two acts.

Such is the domestic history recorded in Rome, on the Aventine Hill, where the beautiful church of St. Alexius yet stands, and is visited, on his feast, by crowds of his fellow-citizens. The view from its garden is one of the most charming in Rome. The basilica of Santa Sabina is next door to it.

THE WITCH OF ROSENBURG.

PART I.

SCENE I.—*A garden, in the centre of the background a statue of our Lady on a pedestal. In front six children, each holding a wreath of flowers, three on each side, in lines diverging from the statue towards the front,* LOTTE *in plain dark robe beside the image.*

LOTTE *and* CHILDREN.

CHORUS OF CHILDREN.

[Air, the Tyrolese Song of Liberty.—*Moore.*]

I.

Joyfully Mary's glories singing,
Joyfully oh! joyfully oh!
Come we loving tribute bringing,
Joyfully oh! joyfully oh!
Mist-clad echoes wake on the mountain,
Drown the roaring dash from the fountain:
With her name above them ringing,
Joyfully oh! joyfully oh!
Joyfully, joyfully, joyfully, joyfully, joyfully,
joyfully oh!
Joyfully oh! joyfully oh!

II.

Lovingly on her footsteps pressing,
Lovingly oh! lovingly oh!
Let us gain her love and blessing,
Lovingly oh! lovingly oh!
Mary be the star on us shining,
Whether life be fresh or declining,
Her sweet smile our hearts caressing,
Lovingly oh! lovingly oh!
Lovingly, lovingly, lovingly, lovingly, lovingly,
lovingly oh!
Lovingly oh! lovingly oh!

III.

Happily round her image closing,
Happily oh! happily oh!
Round her feet our gifts disposing,
Happily oh! happily oh!
Nothing shall on earth our hearts sever,
Mary's children be sisters ever!
On her tender heart reposing,
Happily oh! happily oh!
Happily, happily, happily, happily, happily,
happily oh!
Happily oh! happily oh!

[*At the beginning of the third stanza, the children, holding their wreaths, move inwards, still singing. The two in front go slowly before the others to the foot of the image.* LOTTE *takes their wreaths from them, and hangs them, by small hooks on them, to an invisible string round the foot or top of the pedestal. They return to their places behind the others; so the two next, and the two last.*

While this is going on, enters the COUNTESS ANNA, *disguised in a red cloak and hood, which completely covers her dress, and conceals her features. She is bent double, leaning on a crutched stick, and trembling, shaking her hands and head, as if palsied. She creeps up slowly, so that when the children have finished and turn fairly round, she has reached the middle, and they see her.*

The children are terrified, and scream, "A witch! a witch!" *and run away in every direction.*]

LOTTE. Stop, stop! Don't be so foolish.

CHILD. A witch! a hag!

LOTTE. Fear nothing; stay with me, dear children.

CHILD. A witch! a witch!

[*Exeunt Children.*

SCENE II.—LOTTE *and* ANNA

ANNA. What is the matter? What is the meaning of this confusion?

LOTTE. Oh, nothing. Your sudden entrance startled the poor children, and they ran away. They will no doubt return again.

ANNA. Were they afraid of me, then?

LOTTE. You know these children of the mountains are inclined to be carried away by foolish terrors. But it will be my care to remove them to the utmost.

ANNA. I understand you. I heard their cries: they believe me to be a witch. Do you take me for one?

LOTTE. Oh no, no. I have no such fears.

ANNA. Are you not from this country? Your dress seems foreign.

LOTTE. No: I came from afar, and have only been here a few months.

ANNA. And you do not shrink from a poor old thing like me?

LOTTE. [*aside.* What a sweet voice she has for one so old!] Why should I? Am I not poor too?

ANNA. Yes; but you are young, and I am old and decrepit.

LOTTE. Then so much the more you need assistance from the young.

ANNA. And have you no repugnance to an ugly old hag, as the children called me?

LOTTE. [*laughing.*] Poor things! Do they not pray daily that their parents should enjoy a long life; and is not decrepitude, or palsy, or, if you please, ugliness, almost a condition of their prayers being heard?

ANNA. Then you fear no mischance from me? You do not believe me to be spiteful, or mischievous, or likely to harm you?

LOTTE. No, my good grandame, I fear not man.

ANNA. No! Then have you *no* fear?

LOTTE. Yes, I have a twofold fear, but very different in their characters.

ANNA. What are they?

LOTTE. I fear God, and I fear sin: the one with love, the other with abhorrence.

ANNA. Happy the mother that owns such a child! [*Lotte bursts into tears.*] What is the matter, child? Have I hurt your feelings? [*Soothingly.*] Have you suffered misfortune?

LOTTE. I have no mother! I am a poor orphan; a friendless wanderer upon earth. No, not friendless. [*Pointing upwards.*] I have a Father there.

ANNA. O that I could be a mother to you on earth! But what can a poor helpless creature like me do for any one?

LOTTE. Much, very much.

ANNA. What?

LOTTE. Give the young the merit of helping you. [*Puts a gold coin into Anna's hand, who takes it.*]

ANNA. Thank you a thousand times. [*Looks at it intently.*] But gold! Where got you this?

You ill can spare it. It is pierced and has been worn. [*Much agitated.*] Where has it been?

LOTTE. It was my poor mother's, and my father's before her. I have no other, and feel ashamed to wear it or keep it when I see one before me in greater need than myself.

ANNA. But you are poor yourself.

LOTTE. Yet young and strong, and can work for my bread. The little salary for my schooling, my knitting and sewing, give me enough to live on.

ANNA. [*moved.*] Child, God will bless you for your charity—yes, your fearless charity to a poor helpless old stranger. But I must leave you.

LOTTE. Will you not come and rest in my poor cottage? It is hard by.

ANNA. No, thank you; you have made me richer than I have been this many a day. Will you give me your arm to the high road, and then I will totter along.

[LOTTE *gives* ANNA *her arm, and leads her out, when they come to the side,* ANNA *stops.*]

ANNA. What were you doing when I came in here?

LOTTE. The children were practising for a village festival a song which I had composed and put to a popular air for them.

ANNA. And I appeared like a hawk amongst your chicks, and frightened them away. I fear I have done you mischief, and yet you have been kind to me, and shown no anger.

LOTTE. [*laughing cheerfully.*] How could I have acted otherwise? I should not have been a Christian else.

ANNA. Where did you acquire these principles—aye, and your accomplishments? Poor children do not learn to compose songs, and put them to music.

LOTTE. My dear mother, before her death, secured to me the best education in St. Leo's Convent, near the place of my birth; it was my only inheritance, and my best.

ANNA. And was it from her you inherited your courage?

LOTTE. My father, whom I never knew, was an officer of high rank. If there is anything in it I may owe it to him.

ANNA. [*starting.*] An officer! Well, adieu. God bless you.

LOTTE. Good bye, my good old dame. [*Leads her out and then returns.*]

SCENE III.—LOTTE *alone.*

LOTTE. Poor thing! how will she ever get home without help? I wonder where her home is. She seemed to be a stranger to the children. Poor children, too, I may well say. That they should have been frightened away by a poor harmless old woman—taking her for a witch. No doubt their parents will give them a good lesson, perhaps chastise them, for being so weak and silly. In the meantime, their little festival has been spoiled.

How thankful I ought to be that a good education has made me feel so differently, and only compassionately towards the miserable. Suffering ourselves is a great lesson.

But what a mystery my own poor little life is to myself.

Who and what was my father? My mother, who died so young, could only tell me that he was a noble officer in garrison, in the distant province where I was born, and married her, a poor peasant; but before he could make his marriage known to his family, was killed in quelling a riot.

Here are his precious relics. [*Taking them from her bosom.*] This is his portrait. [*Kiss-*

ing it and replacing it.] This is the invaluable document which attests his marriage; this his last letter, unfinished and without his name, but stained with his blood.

But of what use are these papers to me, who know not where to look for his family? I have wandered thus far, and must rest contented to end my days as schoolmistress at Rosenburg. [*Hears some one coming, and hastily puts back the papers.*]

SCENE IV.—LOTTE *and* GRETCHEN.

GRETCHEN. [*rushing in, singing* To-le-ra-la, *or some such cadence.*] What, dear Lotchen, alone? I thought some of your children would be here. Have they all run away? What has been the matter?

LOTTE. Oh, nothing. Have *you* heard or seen anything?

GRET. Heard or seen anything? I should think so. Both. I never saw such a regular *hullabaloo* in our quiet village.

First, I met the children running in, screaming, some tumbling over and crying. Among these was little Plumper, the tailor's—that is, the Burgomaster's—child [*sarcastically*], who

fell with a great crash at her father's door. Everybody came out in a terrible state, and questioned the children, who at first could give no account of their panic. At last they told an incoherent story of a witch having appeared, nobody knew how, at the school, and attacked them with a stick; that she had two eyes like coals, and a beard and hair like adders; and so they ran away. So I thought I would come and learn the truth.

LOTTE. Really, Gretchen, I can hardly help laughing—only I fear the poor children may have really suffered.

GRET. Pooh, pooh, Lotchen, they will be no worse after they have each had a cup of tea, or a thump on the back, according to the disposition of their parents. But what is it all about?

LOTTE. The fact is that a poor old palsied woman, in a red cloak, made a sudden appearance here, while the children were rehearsing my little hymn, when they took wing like a flock of starlings. The poor woman said not a word, and I, who remained, never saw her face. She was bent double, and kept her hood low down.

GRET. [*shaking her head gravely.*] Do you know, Lotchen, that I fear I should have run away too. An old woman, doubled down, in a red

cloak, and wagging her head! no, I could hardly have stood it. Ah, now, don't laugh at me. You are a scholar, and I am only a poor orphan, that can only knit and sew, and scarcely read. But really, if all that does not make a witch, I don't know what does.

LOTTE. Why, my dear Gretchen, nothing does.

GRET. Nonsense, now. You don't mean that.

LOTTE. Well, we will talk it over. In the meantime——

GRET. Why, look out for squalls. You must come away.

LOTTE. What for?

GRET. Because, before I came up the hill here, I saw a solemn conclave being held in the square by Frau Plumper, who was very red, Frau Zucker, who was very pale, and Frau Semmel, who was very blue; and I'm sure there was mischief brewing among them. They were pointing this way. So as Frau Plumper went in to get her walking shoes, being always in slippers, and I know she can only go gingerly up hill, I ran straight up to warn you.

LOTTE. I am ready to face them, and speak the truth to them.

GRET. They will not listen to you. So come with me to the little chapel in the forest, and I will

come back and let you know when the coast is clear.

[*She takes* LOTTE'S *arm, and leads her away, singing, as in the opening chorus :*]

"Nothing shall on earth our hearts sever,
Mary's orphans be sisters ever." [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.—*Enter* PLUMPER, SEMMEL *and* ZUCKER.

PLUMPER. [*looking about and out of breath.*] So she is gone, is she? A nice thing, isn't she, to make us come up all this hill, on purpose to see her, and she to get out of the way? [*Puffing.*]

SEM. Just like her. But what is to be done?

ZUCK. The probability is that she went off with the witch. She seemed very familiar, as my little Sophia told me, having had courage to look once behind her, to pick up her shoe, which, I am sorry to say, she ripped open on a stone.

SEM. Ah, to be sure. The children said she had a stick. What sort of stick was it, I wonder?

ZUCK. Of course, as she was a witch, it must have been a broomstick.

SEM. No doubt. Indeed, I think some of the dear children said that it was a broomstick, with the broom end upwards, on which she leaned all her weight. She could not have leaned so on the top.

PLUMP. It seems all plain now. To-night is the Walpurgis night, when all the witches meet in the Karz mountains, to which they ride through the air. Witches are always skinny, you know, and this wicked Lotte is not stout, so probably one broomstick did for both.

SEM. How else could the witch have got away?

PLUMP. Exactly. You know that at my request my man Karl, that is the Burgomaster, who never refuses me anything reasonable, and of course I never ask for anything else, sent off Hans and Fritz, his two most nimble journeymen, in pursuit—one up, one down the road. Hans, who, though thin in body and long in legs, is very courageous, ran much farther than it was possible for so old, doubled, and palsied a creature to have got. Yet he met nobody except the Countess, who was hurrying before him to her carriage, with Bertha, carrying a large bundle, which he believed to be a blanket for some poor person.

So, nothing daunted, he asked her boldly if she had seen or passed a witch on the road.

ZUCK. And what did she answer? She must have been much alarmed.

PLUMP. Not at all. As he told me when he called me aside on our way up here, she only

smiled and said, "My good friend, how am I to tell a witch from anybody else?"

SEM. Of course, he had no difficulty in answering that.

PLUMP. Oh, as he described her: red cloak, bent double, shaking, &c.

SEM. What did she say then?

PLUMP. Why she actually laughed out, and so did Mam'selle Bertha. Then the Countess replied: "I assure you, we have neither *passed* nor *met* any one such as you describe."

ZUCK. All this comes of your fine education, now-a-days, which makes people laugh at what their forefathers believed.

PLUMP. Yes; Hans, who is a very mild and right-thinking youth, though slender, said he was rather hurt by such levity. However, though she has escaped this time, she will not the next.

Karl, that is the Burgomaster, will have her looked after, and brought to *benign* punishment.

SEM. And what would that be?

PLUMP. Well, I believe, strictly speaking, it would be burning to death.

ZUCK. Oh, shocking! terrible! That would never do. I like a bonfire very much; but I own I could not look at one, with even a wicked witch inside of it.

PLUMP. Well, then, there is a milder treatment by water.

ZUCK. How is that?

PLUMP. By ducking her in a pond.

SEM. Well, that *is* better; but I should be sorry to go even so far. Suppose, therefore, that we leave matters of law to the men, and look to our own affairs. Do you think the witch has done any harm so far?

PLUMP. I hope not. For my part, when my little pet came running in like a frightened dove, I did not for a moment lose my presence of mind. Poor Karl, that is the Burgomaster, was measuring a new customer for a jacket, and dropped his measure in his fright, and let the shears fall on his foot. But I immediately seized the child, and gave her a good shaking, to bring her back to her senses. When she had told me about the witch, I added a few smart whacks between the shoulders, to make her cough, in case she had swallowed a lot of crooked pins. Then I looked and saw she did not squint with the other eye, and that her feet were not more turned in than they were before, poor child! so I was satisfied.

ZUCK. What a good mother you are, Frau Plumper; I never thought of any of these remedies.

SEM. Nor I. But now what is to be done about that sly creature Lotte?

PLUMP. Why certainly—[*A singing* Tol-la-rol *is heard.*] There is that silly Gretchen coming. She will tell us where she is to be found.

[*Enter* GRETCHEN, *tripping in.*]

SCENE VI.—*The same and* GRETCHEN.

GRET. [*astonished.*] I beg pardon, ladies; you here? What has happened to bring you up here?

PLUMP. Why, have you not heard?

GRET. [*aside.*] I don't choose to have heard. [*Aloud.*] Pray tell me.

PLUMP. Surely you know that a witch has been here, and that your friend Lotte is deeply involved in her sudden disappearance.

GRET. Indeed; how?

ZUCK. Yes, indeed. The witch and Lotte vanished at the same time; and as no one can doubt as to *how* the one travelled, there is strong suspicion that Lotte went by the same conveyance.

GRET. And what is that?

SEM. Don't affect ignorance. You know very well.

GRET. Then was that person whom I saw with Lotte in the wood, certainly the witch?

ALL. [*eagerly rushing forward.*] *Most* certainly. Do tell us all you have seen.

PLUMP. What was her height?

GRET. About my own.

ZUCK. Hideously ugly?

GRET. Not more than I am.

SEM. In a red cloak?

GRET. No: in a peasant's ordinary dress.

PLUMP. Then it is plain the witch had transformed herself into——

GRET. Me!

ALL. [*indignantly.*] How! are you the witch in the form of Gretchen?

PLUMP. If so, heaven be 'twixt us and harm. Avaunt, avaunt you!

GRET. [*laughing immoderately.*] No, no, no, I am only Gretchen, the poor orphan girl.

[*The others come forward, having shrunk away, repeating,* Avaunt, you, you witch!]

ZUCK. How dare you frighten honest people by pretending to be a witch?

GRET. I? I never did any such thing. *I* was the person with whom Lotte went away into the wood. So if it was the witch that went away with her, I must be, madam, the hexe.*

* Witch.

But see, here poor Lotchen herself comes, impatient, no doubt, for my return according to promise.

SCENE VII.—*The same and* LOTTE.

LOTTE. My dear Gretchen, I got anxious to see you return, so I came after you. Ladies, good morning! To what do I owe the pleasure of this unexpected visit?

PLUMP. To a previous visit, from a perhaps more welcome guest.

LOTTE. Indeed! Pray, from whom? For surely there are none in the village for whom I ought to feel, or do feel, more regard than the ladies who so kindly patronize me, and entrust me with the education of their children.

PLUMP. Yes, and a pretty return *we* have; and a nice education *they* get.

LOTTE. How, ma'am? I own I am very deficient, but I trust I do my best.

ZUCK. I suppose by introducing them to such company as nearly frightened them to death this morning.

LOTTE. How could I help that poor old creature coming inside the gate, to see and hear those pretty children?

SEM. Yes, very likely, indeed. As if she was not your friend, the horrid thing! You seemed very familiar with her.

LOTTE. Not more than I hope always to be with any distressed object of compassion.

PLUMP. Hear her, hear her! A witch is to her an object of compassion.

GRET. Gently, gently, mother Plumper, you have no proof that it was a witch.

PLUMP. No proof! A hideous, crooked hag

GRET. Who saw her face?

LOTTE. Certainly, *I* did not.

GRET. Did any of the children? Did yours?

PLUMP. Well, I don't think she did.

GRET. Or yours?

ZUCK. She couldn't on account of the hood.

GRET. Or yours?

SEM. She never said she did.

GRET. Then on whose authority do you report her supreme ugliness?

PLUMP. What stuff! [*Huffed.*] As if it was possible that a witch should be otherwise than hideous.

GRET. Oh, now I see. She was a witch because she was ugly, and she was ugly because she was a witch. [*Curtseying.*]

PLUMP. Did you ever hear such impudence?

LOTTE. Do not be angry, ma'am, with poor Gretchen; after all, she only spoke the truth.

ZUCK. You had better mind your own affairs; you have plenty to think for yourself. Do you think I will ever send my children again to be taught by one who makes light of charmers and soothsayers?

LOTTE. I know what penalty your withdrawal of your children will inflict on me. In the name of justice, then, answer me, before I am condemned. [*With dignity.*] Tell me, then, Dame Zucker, since I came here, three months ago, have your children gone back, or have they advanced? Have they applied more or less? Have they learnt more and better than previously? Have you praised or blamed their mistress and their education? You hesitate; come, answer, for the sake of justice and truth to the heavens above.

ZUCK. [*abashed.*] Well, I own that till to-day, when my dear little Sophia came running in with her shoe ripped up, I have never had cause to complain.

LOTTE. And you, Frau Semmel, do you intend to remove your child?

SEM. Most certainly. I would not think of leaving her with the friend of conjurers and fortune-tellers.

LOTTE. Be it so; but I conjure you to answer me in all sincerity: Since your daughter has been under my care, has she become more or less docile, obedient, cheerful? Has she diminished in affection to you and her family; or has she been morose, ill-tempered and selfish? Speak out the truth, and heaven will bless you.

SEM. Well, I must own that she is, in all these respects, wonderfully changed for the better, in the last three months.

LOTTE. Thank you; this is indeed a consolation. And now, Madam Plumper, upon whom I know my fate depends, more than on any one else, tell me if your child has of late become more serious and steady, more truthful, more recollected, more watchful to correct her failings—in fine, more religious, edifying and devout, since, than before she came under my tuition?

PLUMP. Oh, I admit all this. Certainly she is most remarkably improved since you came. But how am I to know that all this does not come from magical arts and charms? I will run no risk. We three are patronesses of the school, and it cannot last one day after we withdraw our protection. We can easily find another mistress.

GRET. [*curtseying.*] Pray, ma'am, take me; I can

teach your children the clever use of the knitting-needles and spinning wheel, to which they had better return, since you do not seem to value dear Lotchen's learning and the moral good she has taught your children.

LOTTE. Peace, dear Gretchen. Ladies, I own I was not prepared for this sudden close of my occupation here. After much wandering and much suffering, Providence seemed to have guided my footsteps here. I hoped that, in my humble sphere, I was doing my best to discharge my duties, and not unsuccessfully. I looked forward to years of peace in contented poverty. I love the children of Rosenburg, and they appeared to love me. I looked forward to see them grow up round me, not so much patronesses as friends; and then to sleep among them in the "dear God's field," with my little wooden cross over me, on which some of them would hang, sometimes, a garland, with the simple inscription, "Lotte, the Schoolmistress."

ZUCK. [*moved.*] Really, Frau Plumper, perhaps, you know——

SEM. You know it may have all been an unfortunate accident.

PLUMP. No such thing. We should be disgraced

if we tolerated it. What would the people of Blum and Spondel and Stein say of Rosenburg, if they heard it? No, Miss Lotte, go you must. Only one thing I beg: go away altogether, and do not remain in our neighborhood, to draw away our children.

LOTTE. Madam, I will obey you so far as I acknowledge your authority; but must decline to do so further. I am alone in the world; I have no roof over my head when I leave the schoolhouse.

GRET. Yes, yes; you have one in my garret: you shall share all with me. "Mary's orphans ever sisters be."

LOTTE. No, dear Gretchen, it cannot be; I will honestly earn my own bread, and I will seek it where I may still see my dear little ones, and pray in our sweet church.

GRET. But where will you obtain occupation?

LOTTE. Dear friend, you know that the orphan is not fatherless. Never yet have I been forsaken in my many wanderings. I have heard much of the unbounded kindness and charity of the Countess Anna: perhaps she will give me some little to do while I look about me.

GRET. [*aside.*] I will take that hint, and see what I can do. [*Aloud.*] Yes, I think that good and

noble lady will take a more generous view of your case than these good village dames.

PLUMP. [*aloud and indignant.*] It shall be my care, miss, to inform the Countess of all that has happened; and she is too good a Christian to countenance witchcraft and sorcery. So put no hopes there, but leave at once, and let us never see you again.

CHORUS.

[PLUMPER, SEMMEL *and* ZUCKER.]

Wicked girl, begone, begone;
Go: avaunt, thou witch's friend!
Henceforth, of our children, none
Thy false teaching shall attend.

[GRETCHEN *is in tears: on one side with* ZUCKER, *the other two on the other. Towards the end,* LOTTE, *who is in the middle, looking upwards, with her hands clasped, throws out her arms, still with her eyes to heaven, when the curtain drops.*]

END OF PART I.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A forest;* LOTTE *and* GRETCHEN *discovered, seated on a low rock or stone,* GRETCHEN *with her right hand covering her eyes, and her left in* LOTTE'S *right, sobbing.*

LOTTE *and* GRETCHEN.

LOTTE. Courage, my dear sister, courage! Console yourself! [*Gret. sobs.*] Why really one would think that *you* are the one who is driven out homeless and shelterless, and not I.

GRET. And so I am equally with you. [*They rise.*]

LOTTE. How, dearest?

GRET. Because I am determined to share your fate altogether. Either you come home with me and share my garret and my crust, or I remain with you in the forest till you have found a home.

LOTTE. No, my dear child, this cannot be. It is unreasonable and unkind.

GRET. Why so? Why at least unkind?

LOTTE. Because if *Providence,* in its wisdom, has driven me abroad, a poor wanderer, it is unreasonable for *man* to do the same to another, without having the same wisdom; and it is unkind in him to double that trial which God has inflicted.

GRET. And should *I* do that?

LOTTE. Certainly, dearest sister; to see you suffer as much as myself would be to double my measure of unhappiness. So let me bear my burden alone, till better days. They will soon come.

GRET. Then come and share my humble roof and fare.

LOTTE. That, too, is quite impossible.

GRET. Why?

LOTTE. Imagine what a most unpleasant position it would be for all parties, for those ladies and myself to be meeting every minute, face to face, and either to be passing one another cold and hard, or paying insincere courtesies.

GRET. Well, I have no doubt, Lotchen, that *you* do not speak this way through pride. But if I had been treated as abominably as you have, *my* spirit would be up, and I should delight in tossing up my head like a young heifer every time I passed those great ladies. However, never mind, won't *I* do so for you!

LOTTE. No, my dear Gretchen, don't do any such thing. Listen to me. For three months I have been doing my best to inculcate on the neglected village children the duty of docile obedience to their parents. I have particularly

taught them to respect their judgment, and not to set their own above it, nor to consider them stupid or ignorant, nor ordinarily in the wrong.

GRET. Well, Lotchen, I own you are cleverer than I thought you, if you have made them think *that.*

LOTTE. Well, never mind. The children, I know, love me; and what a pretty finish I should put to all my teaching were I now so to act as to force them by my presence to one of these alternatives: either to take part with their parents, and so cease to love me, or to take my side, and so through me lose that filial deference which I have so strongly impressed on them.

GRET. [*seizing Lotte's hand.*] Oh, my darling Lotchen, how good and considerate you are!

LOTTE. Dear Gretchen, the memory of children, while such, is very short. I would rather slip gradually out of their minds, with a slowly lingering love, than be remembered as the firebrand that kindled enmities in households. And then there is a higher consideration still.

GRET. What can that be?

LOTTE. I have been ever endeavoring to instil into those tender minds never to retain malice, or worse, a grudge, still less display one. In their little childish quarrels, I have tried to

make them feel that the one who considered, or knew herself right, should be the first to give way and make it up, on the ground that she could best afford to be generous. What will all my past teaching be worth if now, believing myself right, I show stubbornness and resentment?

On the other hand, how happy ought I to feel, and even thankful, that an opportunity has been afforded me of teaching by example the most difficult of my lessons. Perhaps my heavy trial has been sent to me on purpose.

GRET. Dear good Lotchen, you are right. Indeed you are sure to be right, while I, a poor clumsy country girl, am sure to be wrong. *You* ought to have been born a princess.

LOTTE. Hush, hush, Gretchen; no murmuring, please.

GRET. However, you do not want to leave the neighborhood?

LOTTE. No; as I have said, I have an impression that I may yet do some good here, and perhaps from time to time catch a glimpse of my dear children, without giving offence.

GRET. And you would not refuse occupation from our noble lady?

LOTTE. Certainly not; I have heard so much of

her kindness. But how approach her? I have never spoken to her.

GRET. Leave that to me. Go and rest again in the little chapel for a short time, and when you are tired come back here.

[*Leads her away, then returns.*

SCENE II.—GRETCHEN *and* BERTHA

GRET. So now, Gretchen, let us see what your little head is fit for. It is yet early in the day, and I shall be but a poor manager if dear Lotchen sleeps in the woods to-night. Everybody is kind to me about here, and there is hardly a cottage that will not take her in for me; and gratis, too, for I fear we have neither of us much to pay a lodging with. By the by, the poor thing has eaten nothing; how shall I manage that? Oh, here comes one that will help me.

[*Enter* BERTHA.]

BERTHA. Good day, Gretchen.

GRET. Good day, Mam'selle Bertha. You are the very person I wanted most to see.

BER. How fortunate! But tell me, was that Lotte, the village schoolmistress, that you parted with just now?

GRET. The village schoolmistress that was.

BER. How! not that *is* now?

GRET. That was a few hours ago, but that has been summarily dismissed and sent out a poor lonely outcast on the world. Poor child!

BER. By whom?

GRET. By the great dames of Rosenburg, Madam Plumper & Co.

BER. What for?

GRET. For a great crime, no doubt. For nothing less than harboring and abetting, as I have heard Herr Papickschonntzer, the notary, call it, a witch.

BER. A witch!

GRET. Yes; a witch in a red cloak. [*Bertha laughs violently.*] Yes, *you* may laugh, who have the best of the castle up there. But it is no laughing matter to poor Lotchen [*hurt*], who may have to pass the night with the wolves in the forest; for she won't share my lodging, out of pure delicacy.

BER. Pardon me, dear Gretchen; I assure you I was laughing at anything but poor Lotte. She shall not sleep in the wood. I will see to that. But tell me, do you know anything of her history? You seem to be her only friend. Does she make any mystery of her life?

GRET. Oh, dear, no. She is too simple for that. That she is a lady born I have no doubt: everything about her, except her dress, shows that.

BER. Then what account does she give of herself?

GRET. She is incapable of boasting. but she has told *me* several things.

BER. She was an officer's child, was she not?

GRET. [*surprised.*] Who told you *that?*

BER. Oh, I heard it somewhere.

GRET. Well, that *is* strange. But it is true. Her father seems to have been killed in an engagement soon after his marriage with a peasant girl, her mother, who died while she was yet young, leaving means to educate her. She wandered in search of her family, till, broken down with fatigue and disappointment, she accepted her late office.

BER. But perhaps this history may be the result of an illusion without proof.

GRET. Illusion, Miss Bertha! Lotte is incapable of illusion. She has every proof in papers carefully preserved. Unfortunately her father's name is torn out of the certificate of marriage, except his title of Count Ludwig——

BER. [*astonished.*] Count Ludwig?

GRET. Yes; but then she has a miniature of him round her neck, which it would be impossible

not to recognize as the portrait of Lotchen's father.

BER. [*agitated.*] Would it be possible to see these various objects?

GRET. When once she is quietly in some home, however humble, she will refuse you nothing. You do not know her yet, as I do; you will, perhaps, one day.

BER. Thanks, Gretchen, I must go to procure her shelter. But, one moment more, I fear she may be in want of food. Is she in distress?

GRET. Well, I doubt if she has taken anything to-day. She should want for nothing that I might have to give. But unfortunately I live by my daily toil, and to-day I have earned nothing. As for poor Lotchen, I suspect her purse is as empty as mine.

BER. [*taking out her purse.*] I thought she was better off. She gave a gold piece very lately to a poor person. It seemed to have been worn as a keepsake; and so it has come into my hands.

GRET. Dear, unselfish soul! She must have parted with one of the proofs of her birth in charity! It was a coin with a saint's figure on it, left her as father's. No: she would give her heart away to a poor person. But if she parted with

that coin, depend upon it she had not a penny left.

BER. [*giving her money.*] Go, good Gretchen; run and bring your admirable friend some nourishment as quickly as possible.

GRET. God bless you, Mam'selle Bertha. Perhaps, however, I had better go round, and tell Lotte not to come here till I fetch her. She might be startled at finding you instead of me.

BER. That is quite right. And pray, Gretchen, say nothing about the Countess to her—you must for the present deal with me.

[*Exit Gretchen.*

SCENE III.—BERTHA *and* COUNTESS ANNA.

ANNA. My true Bertha, have you made anything out of the doings in the village?

BER. Yes, all. And, my kind mistress, I have much to tell you, which will, I think, astonish you.

ANNA. But first let me know something about this poor girl whom you know I have taken an almost foolish fancy for.

BER. No, Madam, not foolish; quite the contrary. She is worthy of all your patronage, and perhaps more.

ANNA. In what way?

BER. She seems, by all account, not merely a well-educated girl, but of a most refined and virtuous mind, religious, charitable, and unselfish in the highest degree.

ANNA. Of the last, I think we have evidence in that gold piece which I put into your hands to learn the history of. Have you made it out?

BER. I think I have. But I must tell you about it more at leisure, as it must be talked of with other things. For the present, there is something still more urgent.

ANNA. What is that?

BER. That poor Lotte is wandering here in the forest, without a roof for the night or bread for the day.

ANNA. Is that possible? Did those village ladies turn her adrift without any compensation? Had she no little savings about her?

BER. Not a farthing. In giving that gold piece to the witch that you know something of, which is now in my hands, she gave away her last coin. In fact she gives away everything.

ANNA. [*moved and serious.*] And yet, Bertha, we consider ourselves charitable and expect lavish thanks when we drop the overflow of our purses on the heads of the poor. Surely, it is the

truest charity when the cup of cold water which was just rising to the lips of the weary poor is turned aside and placed between those of one poorer and thirstier. Not only the widow's copper mites, but this orphan's golden token, will one day rise in judgment against us. But we are losing time about her.

BER. I hope not. I have sent her trusty and loving friend Gretchen to provide her refreshments at once. A lodging is the next thing.

ANNA. Oh, that is easily done. There is poor Elizabeth, whose son is gone from home, and who keeps her cottage so neat, who will gladly let her empty room.

BER. Nothing could be better. I will see to all arrangements. You had better not appear in the matter. I will settle it with Gretchen.

ANNA. Do, please. When you have told me all you know about her, and I satisfy myself of the truth of her history, it will be time enough for me to see her. If she be truly an officer's daughter, which may account for that coin having got into her hands, we can easily provide for her in a manner more befitting her rank. Should it turn out to be a mistake, for deceit is not to be thought of here, it will have spared

her some pain and mortification not to have seen me.

BER. True indeed, and most delicate on your part. But here comes Gretchen.

SCENE IV.—*The same and* GRETCHEN.

BER. Well, Gretchen, is all right? You have been very quick.

GRET. [*respectfully curtseying to the Countess.*] Yes, I fortunately met a person in the forest selling what I wanted, and took it to Lotte. Poor thing, she is most grateful. Does the Countess know her case?

ANNA. Yes, indeed; and I have already given Bertha directions about her having a nice lodging prepared for her.

GRET. God bless you, Madam, for your kindness; I said I was sure you would not let her suffer want or distress.

ANNA. Yet what have I done compared with what you have? You, a poor girl yourself, devoting yourself to your friend.

GRET. Oh, it is nothing for me. But she will be coming here just now by appointment, and perhaps, Ma'am, you would not like being seen with me by her.

ANNA. No, I think it is better not at present. Let us retire, and we will meet again.

BER. But Gretchen can tell you more of what we have to talk about than I. She had better come with us.

GRET. Willingly: Lotte is to wait here for me if I am gone.

SCENE V.—*As they are going out, enter on the other side, in the background,* CHILDREN (*six or more*), *with little baskets, singing as below, as they gather flowers dispersed;* LOTTE *also comes in, and stands apart. Neither she nor the children see the* COUNTESS, *&c., who pauses at the side.*

[*The same,* LOTTE, CHILDREN.]

ANNA. What a pretty sight! Let us stay a moment and watch it here apart.

CHILDREN. [*singing.*]—

CHORUS OF CHILDREN.

I.

Be 't ours in summer bowers
To pick our Lady's flowers;
Lilies, blue bells, and wild roses.

II.

'Tis good in wintry wood
To gather for the rood,
Beaded holly's prickly posies.

[*They stand together.*

1ST CHILD. That is one of the many pretty songs that dear Lotte taught us.

2ND CH. Dear Lotte! I wonder what has become of her.

3RD CH. How I should like to see her again.

LOTTE. [*who has stolen in behind, unseen—aside.*] Dear children, how I love them.

1ST CH. How stupid it was of us this morning to run away on account of that poor old woman in red.

2ND CH. But she was a witch, wasn't she?

1ST CH. Witch or no witch, we had no business to run away while Lotchen was there.

2ND CH. Certainly, *she* would not stay a moment with anything wicked.

3RD CH. No, nor run away from anything that was not evil.

1ST CH. I am so sorry to have acted so foolishly and alarmed my parents.

3RD CH. And brought so much trouble on poor dear Lotte. I have brought my bread and some fruit from dinner for her, in case I should meet her.

2ND CH. And I put my good mother's birthday present, half a florin, in my pocket, to get her a lodging somewhere.

ANNA. [*apart.*] See what a treasure these good ladies parted with in their mistress.

BER. How the children love her.

GRET. Love her! I should think so, indeed. And so will *you* love her one day, Madam, when you know her as well as we do. But perhaps not; her virtues are perhaps better suited and more congenial to us poor folks than to great ones, who know so much more.

ANNA. No, no. It is from the poor that the rich have generally to learn their virtues. But see, Lotte is stepping forward.

[LOTTE, *who has been watching and listening to the children with great emotion, unseen by them, rushes, much agitated, into the midst of them.*]

LOTTE. Children, my dear children!

CHILDREN. [*closing round her, clapping their hands, and seizing hers, cry out.*] Lotte, dear Lotchen! are you here? Oh, come home again. We will not run away again for any one.

LOTTE. My children, I cannot return, at least now. What a happiness it is to me to find that you still love me.

CHIL. Yes, indeed, we all love you.

LOTTE. If you love me, practise what I have always taught you: to love and obey your parents above all on earth. If your love to

them clash with your love for me, you know which you must prefer. And you have sacred duties towards them, but no longer any towards me. Farewell, my children.

CHIL. But you only make us love you the more by speaking thus.

[LOTTE *covers her face with her hands. The children make a half circle round her, and sing.*]

CHORUS.

I.

Come back to us, Lotte good,
Never seen in wayward mood,
Gentle even with the rude:
Come back to us, mistress good.

II.

Come back for us, Lotte kind,
To our failings ever blind,
Forming heart as well as mind:
Come back for us, mistress kind.

III.

Come back with us, Lotte dear,
Look on us and dry that tear,
Children's love bids nought to fear:
Come back with us, mistress dear.

[*At the last verse the curtain drops.*]

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*The School Garden.* BERTHA *and* GRETCHEN, *meeting from opposite sides.*]

BER. Well met, Gretchen, have you done all we agreed?

GRET. Yes. I have been to the boys' school, and find the men gathering there. What a feast is laid out for them! everything that they are most sure to like.

BER. Yes; Franz, the Countess' steward, understands all that perfectly, and takes a real pleasure in carrying out her kind purposes.

GRET. And I am sure you have done as much for the ladies' department.

BER. You have seen Lotte? She will come?

GRET. She will do anything she is desired. Of course it was a little painful to her to meet her late patronesses. But the moment she was told that the Countess wished it, she consented at once. She is so sweet, and then so grateful.

BER. And the Countess is so fond of her.

GRET. Then tell me, Mam'selle Bertha, why has she never sent for her, or gone to see her, as she does so many other poor people? I think Lotte

must feel a little hurt; but she has never complained.

BER. You will know soon. You remember the Countess wished first to see her papers, which she has done—indeed, she has kept them.

GRET. And is she satisfied?

BER. Quite; they clearly make out her claim to be the orphan daughter of a distinguished officer, and the Countess proposes to provide for her as such.

GRET. Oh, how nice for dear Lotchen, and how good of the Countess! But how soon will this be made known?

BER. Now, immediately. Indeed, this is the main object of the feast. The Countess wishes to vindicate Lotte's honor and declare her position in the face of those who have so insulted and injured her.

GRET. How delightful! I must see this—won't I skip and jump!

BER. Take care, Gretchen, do not hurt their feelings more than is necessary. Come with me for a moment, then return to keep order among the children, especially when Lotte appears.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*Enter the Children, except 2nd and 3rd*

1ST CHILD. We are not all here. Where are Barbara and Amelia?

2ND CH. [*skipping in.*] Here I am, and Amelia is coming.

1ST CH. What has kept you back?

2ND CH. We looked into the school-room. What a feast! We never had such a one before.

3RD CH. Oh, what a treat! [*Bounding forward.*] You should have stopped to see it.

1ST CH. No indeed; I am not going to be greedy, like you.

3RD CH. Greedy! it is indeed enough to make one greedy.

ALL. What is there? Do tell us. Never mind Bridget's airs.

3RD CH. Why, there are cakes, and jellies, and creams.

2ND CH. And all sorts of fruits from the castle garden.

3RD CH. Aye, and from the hot-houses, peaches, and heaps of grapes.

2ND CH. And there are two huge cherry tarts, each as big as one of the Countess' carriage hind wheels. I can't conceive where they were baked.

3RD CH. And two plum cakes, the size of the front ones.

ALL. Oh, how nice!

[*Some rub their hands, some suck or smack their lips, and all dance about.*]

1ST CH. You need not be so excited. All the village is to come; and depend upon it we children, though the first come, will be the last served.

2ND CH. Oh, as to that, there is enough for three villages.

3RD CH. That is true. But, Barbara, if you had staid longer with me, you would have seen that there were things for us expressly, and not for our *betters*, as they like to call themselves on such occasions.

ALL. What was that?

3RD CH. Well, there were two baskets, immense ones, on one side, covered with napkins, and I could not resist the temptation to peep under.

1ST CH. For shame, Amelia. Don't you remember how Lotte used to tell us never to try to see anything that was shut up or covered, and teach us to repress our curiosity?

2ND CH. Very true, but now that she *has* looked, she may as well tell us what the baskets contained.

3RD CH. Well, the first was full of sugar plums, comfits, and such things, which could only be intended for us.

1ST CH. Indeed! You don't know that there are such things as grown-up children, who will take their share of sweetmeats. Well, what was in the next?

3RD CH. I thought *you* had no curiosity, and would not take advantage of mine.

1ST CH. Certainly *I* wouldn't have looked; and you may keep it all to yourself, if you like.

ALL. No, no; do tell us.

3RD CH. Well, there was the most lovely collection of toys: beautiful dolls, Noah's arks, carts, and I don't know what else. Those, of course, must be intended for us.

2ND CH. No doubt; and they are ours by right. But I know that my dear mother will insist on keeping and taking care of mine for me, and only lend them to me on some grand occasion, or when she thinks I am *very* good; which I am sorry to say is not often.

SEVERAL. That is too bad, Barbara.

1ST CH. Here come our village dames.

SCENE III.—*The same*, PLUMPER, ZUCKER, SEMMEL, *&c.*

PLUMP. Here you are, children; always first when anything is to be got, and last when anything is to be learnt; as my man Karl, that is the Burgomaster, says every morning to little May at school hour.

1ST CH. But, Mother Plumper, we were told to come; and Lotte taught us always to obey.

PLUMP. Lotte, Lotte, always Lotte. Haven't you forgotten her yet?

2ND CH. No, nor never will. Won't she come to the feast?

ZUCK. I should think *not*, indeed. The Countess is giving *us*, her tenants, a grand treat: she knows very well what we have thought it our duty to do by Lotte. And so you think she would feast us just after it, if she disapproved of it?

SEM. On the contrary, I should think she expressly wishes to show her concurrence in it.

CHILDREN. Poor Lotte! Poor Lotchen!

PLUMP. Silence, you naughty children. Do you imagine that the Countess, who is such a religious lady, would countenance a person, an utter stranger, who, for the first time, has brought a wicked witch upon her property?

SEM. Well, at any rate, *she* has disappeared forever, unless that foolish girl brings her back.

ZUCK. But, Dame Plumper, what is the meaning of this festival? You ought to know.

PLUMP. Well, I think that, if any one does, I ought. Mam'selle Bertha gives me all her confidence, and my husband, as Burgomaster, has a right to know all that goes on, and of course has no secrets from me.

SEM. Then is that story true, about a great lady having come to the castle, and having to come here to-day?

PLUMP. Quite true. An immensely rich and noble lady is come to visit the Countess, who did not know her. But she seems to be really the heiress of all her estates; and she wants to bring her to see the village in holiday trim. I only hope she will not be very grand.

2ND CH. Oh, I hope she will be as grand as possible.

3RD CH. Will the Countess not bring her in her grand state carriage-and-four?

PLUMP. No, child; they are to walk quietly down, but they will go back through the village in state.

1ST CH. Oh, what a fine sight it will be. How I long to see this new lady, our future mistress!

ZUCK. For my part, I only hope she may prove half as good as the present.

SEM. Aye, half as indulgent to her tenants.

ZUCK. Or as charitable to the poor.

PLUMP. Or as gracious to the respectable inhabitants.

2ND CH. Or as kind to children.

PLUMP. It will not be easy to have another like Countess Anna. But it is getting late. Ha! Miss Bertha; with Gretchen, too!

SCENE IV.—*The same, with* BERTHA *and* GRETCHEN.

PLUMP. Miss Bertha, when may we expect the Countess?

BER. In a few minutes. She has left the castle.

1ST CH. And the great lady with her?

BER. Yes, child; and I am sure you will be glad to see her.

2ND CH. Why should we be? For my part, I'm sure I would much rather see Lotte again. But it seems she is not to come to the feast.

BER. Why not, I should like to know?

[*Children clap their hands.*]

PLUMP. I thought, that is, we all thought, that after what had happened, you know,——

BER. Indeed, I don't know anything, except that

the Countess wishes every one to enjoy her feast, and certainly has not excluded Lotte.

ZUCK. Mam'selle Bertha, you know there is still a blank of a name in the chorus which we have been learning. Ought we not to know the name of the great lady in whose honor it is, that we may put it in?

BER. Of course, you will know it in due time. You will learn it in a moment when told you.

PLUMP. [*aside to Bertha.*] Mam'selle, it is really becoming late, and—and—you know it is rather disparaging, as my Karl, the Burgomaster, calls it, to keep the principal dames of the village waiting for an appointment. It lessens, you know,——

BER. They are coming—I hear the click of the latch at the gate.

[*All look that way: no one appears.* GRET. *goes among the children, on the other side.*]

GRET. Now, my dear children, they are coming. Behave yourselves well.

ALL. Never fear, Gretchen; the Countess shall see that we know how to behave, even before persons of rank.

[*All continue looking towards the gate.*]

SEM. I fear it has been a false alarm! Nobody seems to be coming.

[*Suddenly the children shriek out in alarm; the elder throw themselves into attitudes, and exhibit gestures of dread, as* LOTTE *slowly approaches, with the Witch on her arm, as before, tottering and shaking, till they reach the middle of the stage, where they stand, forming the centre of the group.*]

GRET. [*to the children, keeping them from running away.*] Now, dear children, don't be afraid. I heard you say in the wood that you would fear nothing that Lotte was with. See, there she is.

PLUMP. How insolent!
ZUCK. How horrible!
SEM. How wicked!
[*All at once, shrinking aside.*]
ALL. The witch! the hag!

PLUMP. [*out of breath, and pressing her chest.*] Miss Lotte, are you not ashamed to appear here after all that has happened?

ZUCK. Yes, you bold girl, go away, do; it is too bad.

SEM. To make everybody else miserable, and spoil our feast. Do go.

LOTTE. You may well suppose, ladies, that I have not come here for my own enjoyment. But I was told that the lady of the feast would not come if I was excluded—I do not know why, for I have never seen her.

PLUMP. What! the new great lady?

LOTTE. Yes.

PLUMP. [*laughing contemptuously.*] Very likely, indeed.

BER. It is indeed quite true. I told Lotte of it myself.

SEM. Well, that *is* puzzling.

LOTTE. But besides that reason, I had another, which was irresistible.

ZUCK. Pray, what was that?

LOTTE. That I found this poor old lady sitting on the road-side, not being able to get here for the feast; and she asked me to give her my arm, which of course I could not refuse.

PLUMP. Of course: you could refuse nothing to your old friend, the witch.

ZUCK. Take her away at once, the hideous beldam.

SEM. Avaunt, wicked old witch!

CHILDREN. Oh, dear Lotty, take her away, do.

LOTTE. Shame, ladies, shame! My children, trust me. Whom among you all has this poor old and helpless creature wronged or harmed? Does not age claim reverence? Does not infirmity call for compassion? Has not hunger and weakness a better right to the enjoyment of a feast than youth and strength?

PLUMP. Feast, did you say? Do you mean to say that that wicked old thing was to sit down

with us at the treat? I would as soon eat off a dish that I had seen a black spider crawl over, as partake of a feast at which she sat beside me. Avaunt!

LOTTE. No, Frau Plumper, we will not interfere with your enjoyment. My poor old protegée and I will find some corner apart, or a bench outside, at which we will gladly receive the crumbs that you can spare us. But when you greet loyally and affectionately your present and your future mistresses, the prayers for blessings from the two poorest, the aged cripple and the homeless orphan, will be allowed above, to mingle with yours, and they will not be rejected, as they are by you, with disdain.

PLUMP. Do you mean to say that you will keep her here to face the Countess and her heiress?

LOTTE. Certainly, and without fear. I have never seen her to speak to her, though I have experienced her bounty. But if half that I have heard of her is true, she will never drive away the old and suffering from *her* feast.

PLUMP. That is very possible; she is so excessively good. But that does not make it less the duty of her faithful and loving vassals to defend her from imposture and from the intrusion of improper characters, which witches certainly are.

LOTTE. This is too bad! What right or reason have you to call my poor companion (who, I hope, does not hear you) by such disgraceful names?

ZUCK. Put an end to this. Do not let the Countess be insulted by the presence of such a person on her estate.

PLUMP. Who, I?

SEM. Yes, Dame Plumper; you, as the Burgomaster's wife, ought to command here.

PLUMP. I, indeed! I would not touch her for the best piece of broadcloth at Innspruck fair.

LOTTE. Once more, ladies, I appeal to your womanly and kindly feelings, if not to your charity. Have compassion on one so stricken with years and infirmities. The hand of our Heavenly Father is laid heavily upon her, that ours may lighten the burden. In doing so, it is that very Hand which sheds youth and strength on you, beauty and innocence on your children—that you take hold of and reverently raise from the curved shoulders of this His aged daughter. He loves to see His own affectionate trials no less affectionately relieved.

[*While she has been speaking*, BERTHA *has gone behind* ANNA, *and placed her hands on her shoulders.*]

PLUMP. That's right, Mam'selle Bertha, lead her

quietly out. You know best, and have courage to do what you know to be your good mistress' pleasure.

LOTTE. [*to Bertha.*] O Miss Bertha, do you go with them? Am I left alone? Am I mistaken in my estimate of the Countess' character?

BER. I must do my duty, Lotte.

LOTTE. [*weeping.*] Well, even so; I will not abandon my poor old charge, made dearer to me by the abandonment. I will lead her out.

[*The* COUNTESS *drops her stick. At the signal,* BERTHA *unclasps her cloak and draws off the hood and cloak. The* COUNTESS ANNA *stands erect, in the middle.* LOTTE *lets go her arm and modestly retreats back. All are seized with shame and astonishment.*]

ALL. The Countess! Countess Anna!

[*All are in confusion and disorder for some time.*]

PLUMP. Pardon, Madam.

ZUCK. *and* SEM. Forgive us, Countess. We did not know it was you, or else——

ANNA. Of course you did not, my good friends. However, my disguise has enabled me to hear the kind things you have said of me personally, though at the expense of the poor supposed witch. But I miss *one* here. Where is my faithful guide and fearless champion? [*Goes to*

Lotte, takes her hand, and brings her forward on her right.] Here is one who truly knows, and has taught me real charity. Till now she has never seen me, nor has she known to whom she has been kind. She intended all her goodness to be bestowed on the old, the powerless, the deformed, and the unamiable. Come, my child, and let me publicly acknowledge myself a debtor to you for the lessons you have taught me, as well as for the alms you have bestowed on me.

ALL. Alms! Is it possible?

ANNA. Yes, alms; nay, *gold.*

PLUMP. [*rather maliciously.*] Oh, then she was not so poor when she left us as some people pretended.

ANNA. No, for she was rich in virtue. But listen to the history of her alms. When I intruded on these children and frightened them *from* school—for which I am trying to make up to-day by drawing them *to* school—

CHILDREN. [*interrupting*] O thanks, thanks! How good!

ANNA. My intention was to try this girl, who had inspired me with an inexplicable affection, from what I heard of her, and saw from a distance—an affection *quite* inexplicable to me till now.

By the experiment, I wished to learn if she was really courageous in her charity, and worthy to be joined to my faithful Bertha in the distribution of my little alms.

ZUCK. Do not call them little, Madam.

PLUMP. No, indeed; we know them too well for that.

ANNA. Well, this child, Lotte, at once gave me proof of her intrepidity by supporting me and offering me harbor in her cottage. But I was not prepared for evidence of her lavish charity.

LOTTE. O dear Madam, say nothing about it; I now know how bold I was and how presumptuous to treat you so. But, indeed, I did not know you.

ANNA. Peace, child. I must do my duty. She took out a gold piece and slipped it modestly into my hand. It is to commemorate this orphan's gift that I have summoned and am going to treat you to-day.

SEVERAL. How so, Madam?

ANNA. Well, listen. I saw that the piece had been worn round the neck as a keepsake or medal, for it had a sacred figure on it. I at once recognized it as one worn by a brave young officer, once most dear to me, but killed while gallantly doing his duty. [*Weeps; Lotte starts.*]

He was Lotte's father. She is no longer, therefore, what you and I have believed her. She is nobly born, and I have called you all together to-day to recognize her before you all, as what she is, and give her a position more worthy of her birth. Henceforward she must be treated as she deserves, and be suitably provided for.

LOTTE. [*overpowered.*] O Countess, generous and truly noble, I deserve not all this goodness, and especially all this public recognition and praise. I am willing to labor for my bread, and try to do good silently, rather than deprive the more deserving of your bounty.

GRET. I am sure, if any one deserves every blessing, it is you, who have never failed to be good to every one. Madam, let me be the first to thank you for your generous reward of virtue. Dear Lotchen is worthy of all your kindness and honor.

ALL. Yes, yes! All blessing to Lotte!

PLUMP. But pardon me, Madam, if I am taking a liberty in saying that we understood you had a still greater purpose in assembling us.

ANNA. What is that?

PLUMP. We were told that we were to have the honor of being presented, and of paying our homage to a rich and noble lady, your guest and

heiress; whom, consequently, after the many years of happiness with which we pray heaven to bless you, our children may have to honor, though we can scarcely hope they will love as we do you, as lady of Rosenburg, and mistress paramount.

ANNA. You are quite right, Dame Plumper.

ZUCK. Will that noble dame be soon here?

ANNA. [*taking Lotte by the hand.*] She is already before you. This is that high-born and worthy lady, heiress by birth, as well as by deserts, of all my worldly estate, and of much more.

PLUMP. Most marvellous!
ZUCK. How wonderful!
SEM. How extraordinary!
} *All at once in great amazement.*

ANNA. A few words will explain all. But first, come to my heart, my darling niece! I have done violence to my feelings thus far, for your sake, but now I can bear it no longer. [*They embrace in tears and sobbing.*] To have seen so much virtue in one so young did indeed delight me. But to have discovered in one so close and dear to me, by holiest ties, is beyond my hopes or deserts.

I told you that to Lotte's alms—I must still call you so——

LOTTE. Oh, yes, yes, always. Never call me anything but Lotte.

THE CHILDREN. [*clapping their hands.*] Yes, Lotchen, Lotchen, nothing else.

ANNA. Well, to those alms you owe your present festival. The officer, by whom I recognized it, having been worn from boyhood, and who was Lotte's father, was my dear brother, the Count Ludwigron Rosenburg. Had not Lotte's extreme charity prompted her to part with so precious a memorial, to relieve an old witch, as everybody thought her, she might have remained a village schoolmistress all her life. The train thus begun was followed up. Lotte carried about her papers which, though incomplete, through my dear brother's death, furnished the clue to certain information that leaves no doubt that she is his child by a marriage which he had no time to make known. And her mother's death left her a helpless orphan, in a distant province. And to confirm all, better proof to my affections than all the lawyer's parchment, is this miniature left by her mother to her. [*Taking it out.*]

BER. And pardon me, Madam, if I have reserved till now a discovery which I made only this morning.

LOTTE. What is that? [*Eagerly.*]

BER. Besides the perfect likeness of her brother,

which the Countess found in the front of the locket, I discovered that the back opened with a spring, concealing locks of two persons' hair, with the names in enamel of Count Ludwig and Charlotte Bluhm.

LOTTE. [*starting and agitated.*] My dear mother's name.

GRET. Yes, and yours, ever since I have known you.

ANNA. Then there is no doubt of this: that you have in this my niece, the true heiress of my brother, real Count of Rosenburg. All that you see is her's—that castle, that village, and all the family estates. I have kept them carefully for such a chance, and shall retire to my own, my mother's property.

LOTTE. No, never, never let that be. I entreat and implore you not to leave the spot on which your virtues are adored by all your people.

PLUMP. No, indeed, you must not leave us, Countess! The young and new lady will enjoy all our confidence and affection, for we have now learnt her real worth.

ZUCK. And I am sure she will forgive any past misunderstanding.

CHILDREN. We have always loved you, Lotte; won't you come and see us, and bring the Countess with you?

LOTTE. To be sure I will.

GRET. As for me, I can only ask to be your maid, to be with you sometimes. [*Bashful and sorrowful.*]

ANNA. Her maid? You, her truest and best friend? No, I am sure you will continue such, and be to her what my faithful Bertha is to me: my right hand and true heart in doing and advising the little good I am able to do.

LOTTE. A thousand thanks, dearest aunt; but how shall I learn the new duties of this unexpected condition of life without the wisdom of your advice and the example of your virtues? No, we must not separate.

ANNA. Then be it so. I do not think we shall quarrel.

PLUMP. [*cheerfully.*] We now know what name to put in our song. But how shall we distinguish in future between our two countesses?

ANNA. Oh, you must call Lotte in future by the title.

SEM. And you, Madam?

ANNA. [*laughing.*] Oh, you may call me the "Witch of Rosenburg."

GRET. [*pertly.*] No, indeed, Madam. Pardon me, but as you have placed me in Lotchen's household, it is my duty to defend her rights and claim her titles.

ANNA. Well, how is she a witch? She has not appeared in a red cloak, nor with a broomstick.

GRET. No, Ma'am; but still I maintain her right to the name. She has scarcely been three months here, and she has fascinated all the children of the village, so as to make them love her dearly. Is it so, children?

CHILDREN. Yes, yes, indeed.

GRET. As for myself, I do not know what philtores or love potions she has used; but she has certainly bewitched me to fondness for her, such as I have never felt for any one else. You must answer for yourself, Countess.

ANNA. Truly, I can say the same. Go on.

GRET. She has thrown a spell over those ladies which has completely changed them towards her; for I am sure they honor and love her virtues as well as respect her rank.

PLUMP, &c. We do, we do, most heartily.

GRET. Only one thing remains which only a witch can do.

BER. What is that?

GRET. Transform herself.

ANNA. How has Lotte done this?

GRET. She has transmuted herself, not into a hare, or a black cat, or an owl; but into a Countess from a schoolmistress, and from a poor orphan girl into, Madam, your dear child.

ANNA. Bravo, Gretchen, you are right. Lotte's has been the true magic, for it has required but one *charm* to do all this.

ALL. And what is that?

ANNA. *Virtue.*

CHORUS.

I.

WOMEN.

Up, from mountain, plain and valley,
Huntsmen, peasants, rise and rally
Round our hospitable Dame;
Peal aloud your* horns and voices
Till the dimmest peak rejoices
In the echo of her name.

[*This is repeated by men's voices, with hunting-horns accompaniment, very distant, like an echo of the women's song.*]

II.

WOMEN.

For this day both birth and merit

MEN.

[*Repeat as above, but nearer.*]

* *Our* in the men's repetition.

WOMEN.

Give us one who shall inherit

MEN.

[*Repeat, nearer still.*]

WOMEN.

All the virtues of her race:

MEN.

[*Repeat, nearer.*]

ALL.

[*The men close, though not seen.*]

Long live Lotchen, fearless maiden,
Be her head with blessings laden,
Radiant be her brow with grace.

The End.

EPILOGUE.

SPOKEN BY GRETCHEN.

I.

As once his walk the good St. Philip took,
Along the *Chiesa Nuovo's* corridor,
He met a father, with demurest look,
Creeping along the wall to the church door.

II.

Standing in front, he brought *him* to a stand,
Leaning upon his trusty walking staff;
And with his well-worn rosary in hand,
Eyed him so quaintly as to make him laugh.

III.

Then said: "My father, whither on so fast?"
"Not *very* fast," the old man said, "but soon
'Twill, after twenty-one,* strike the half-past;
And 'tis my turn to preach this afternoon."

IV.

"To preach: is that all? Please to go up-stairs,
And for my children a nice drama write;
Better to make them happy, than say prayers,
In whom good angels take their chief delight."

* The Italian hours used to run to twenty-four, which was, all the year round, half an hour after sunset.

V.

"But, Father Philip, crowds are in the church:
You would not rob them of this means of grace?"
"Oh, no! we must not leave them in the lurch:
Tell Father Chrysostom to take your place.

VI.

"He's always ready. *Any* one can preach,
But very few, like you, can write a play."
"And fewer can, like you, dear Philip, teach
How, than to preach, 'tis better to obey."

VII.

Now, you those kindly spirits imitate,
Clergy or laity, our good honored friends,
Who come our feast to share or consecrate;
He highest draws our thanks, who lowest bends.*

* Addressed to the Bishop, if present.

L. D. S.

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